

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7448

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

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AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

EUCOM

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 0163

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJ: PARTIES CONTINUE EFFORTS TO FORM GOVERNMENT

REF ANKARA 123

1. WITH END OF HOLIDAY SEASON, POLITICAL ACTIVITIES CENTERING ON 111-DAY OLD GOVERNMENT CRISIS HAVE BEGUN SHOW SLIGHT FORWARD MOVEMENT.

A. THE "NATIONALIST FRONT" COALITION OF CENTER-RIGHT PARTIES ANNOUNCED JANUARY 3 THAT ALTHOUGH THEY HAD NOT ABANDONED THEIR EFFORTS TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, "NECESSARY MAJORITY" FOR FORMING A GOVERNMENT OR DECIDING ON EARLY ELECTIONS RESTED WITH THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DP). ALTHOUGH NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) CHIRMAN ERBAKAN HAS URGED THE PRESIDENT TO DESIGNATE THE "FRONT" TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, PRESIDENT KORUTURK'S REFERENCE IN HIS NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE TO DANGER OF ATTEMPTING TO FORM A LONG-TERM GOVERNMENT BASED ON A "STERILE ABSOLUTE
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MAJORITY, FLOATING VOTES OR OUTSIDE SUPPORT" PROBABLY SHOULD BE

TAKEN AS A PUBLIC SIGNAL THAT, IN ABSENCE OF CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT "NATIONALIST FRONT" COMMANDED COHESIVE MAJORITY, HE WOULD BE UNWILLING TO ASK THEM TO FORM A GOVERNMENT. THERE IS SOME SPECULATION THAT THEY MIGHT SOON ISSUE PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INABILITY TO PRODUCE MAJORITY.

B. FIRST SIGN OF RENEWED INITIATIVE BY RPP CAME WHEN PARTY'S PARLIAMENTARY GROUP VICE CHAIRMAN UGUR MET WITH HIS COUNTERPARTS IN JUSTICE PARTY (JP) DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND REPUBLICAN RELIANCE PARTY (RRP) LAST WEEK TO PROPOSE A MEETING OF PARTY LEADERS TO DECIDE ON AN EARLY ELECTION DATE. (NSP, WHICH STRONGLY OPPOSES EARLY ELECTIONS, WAS NOT CONSULTED.) UGUR TOLD PRESS THE DP AND RRP HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO HOLD SUCH A MEETING, BUT JP HAD NOT YET RESPONDED.

C. THE ZSWING PARTY", DP, HAS ANNOUNCED IT WILL HOLD ITS NATIONAL CONVENTION ON FEBRUARY 1-2 (REFTEL). SELECTION OF PARTY LEADERSHIP AND CONSIDERATION OF COALITION OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE PARTY MAY BE CONTENTIOUS ISSUES. (A RECENT EDITORIAL IN ADALET, UNOFFICIAL PARTY ORGAN, CALLED FOR RESIGNATION OF BOZBEYLI AS PARTY CHAIRMAN.) THE POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS OF FORMER DEMOCRAT PARTY FIGURES OF MENDERES ERS (NOW PERMITTED TO JOIN POLITICAL PARTIES AND HOLD NATIONAL OFFICE), INCLUDING EX-PRESIDENT CELAL BAYAR, HAVE NOT YET BEEN REVEALED. BOTH THE DP AND JP ARE COURTING THEIR SUPPORT AND THE CONVENTION SHOULD SHOW THE EXTENT OF DP SUCCESS IN GAINING THEIR ALLEGIANCE AS WELL AS THE ROLE THEY WILL ASSUME IN PARTY LEADERSHIP. (BOZBEYLI WILL MEET WITH BAYAR JANUARY 7 TO RELAY DP REQUEST THAT BAYAR DECIDE TO SEEK PARTY OFFICE.)

2. COMMENT: THE RPP CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO AKE ANY MAJOR INITIATIVES UNTIL ECEVIT HAS HAD TIME FOR SONCULTATIONS AFTER HIS RETURN FROM BYPRUS, AND ITS PRESENT SOUNDINGS REMAIN EXPLORATORY AND TENTATIVE. RPP SPOKESMAN ALEV COSKUN HAS TOLD US HIS PARTY BELIEVES DEMIREL WILL BE UNABLE TO PUT TOGETHER A MAJORITY COALITION AND THAT PUBLIC OPINION PRESSURES WILL LEAD OTHER PARTIES TO ACCEPT RPP EARLY ELELCTION PROPOSAL. IN EVENT DEMIREL ABANDONS EFFORT AFTER PUBLICLY DECLARING THAT EARLY ELECTIONS WOULD BE NECESSARY IF CENTER-RIGHT GOVERNMENT

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COULD NOT BE FORMED, CHANCES OF INTER-PARTY AGREEMENT ON ELECTION DATE PROBABLY WILL BE IMPROVED. HOWEVER, SOME DELAY COULD BE CAUSED IF DP WAVERERS CONTINUE TO SIT ON THE FENCE UNTIL AFTER THEIR CONVENTION.

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